

The COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLVII

January 2, 1948

NUMBER 12

THE WEEK	291
LETTER FROM A REPLACED PERSON	
<i>Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn</i>	294
THE SCREEN	303
<i>Philip T. Hartung</i>	
THE LABOR MOVEMENT	304
<i>John C. Cort</i>	
BOOKS OF THE WEEK	305

Paris Herald—Your Solar House—Country Place—Back Home—The New Labor Law—Letters of James M. Barrie—The Indefinite River—China Awake—The Earth Beneath—The Art of Happy Marriage—The Face of Robert E. Lee

THE COMMONWEAL is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman. Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in 1924 with Michael Williams as President and Editor.

Published weekly and copyrighted 1947 in the U.S.A. by The Commonwealth Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second class matter February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. U.S. and Canada \$6 a year, Foreign \$7. Single copies 15c

EDWARD S. SKILLIN, Editor

PHILIP BURNHAM, Executive Editor

C. G. PAULDING, Managing Editor

Associate Editors

John C. Cort, Anne Fremantle, Gregory Smith

Kappo Phelan, Theater Philip T. Hartung, Cinema

Corresponding Editor

Harry Lorin Binsse

Advertising Manager

John Brubaker

Expelling the West

THE SOVIET UNION is the aggressive force deliberately breaking apart the East and West. They are deepening the cleavage all around their controlled portion of the world, and, most seriously, at the zonal border in Germany.

On December 20, after weeks of rough pressure, and five days after the London breakup of the Big Four, the Russians, through their General in charge of Germany, threw out of his office as chairman of the Christian Democratic Union the very good German leader, Jakob Kaiser. The occasion utilized for ousting Kaiser was his refusal to take the CDU Party into the Soviet-sponsored "People's Congress," one of those phoney united fronts pretending to represent everybody in a communist-dominated area—and, of course, excluding all non-communist "dangerous thoughts" and multitudinous persons. Characteristically, Jakob Kaiser did not fold up the way demoralized subjects of the Soviets so dismally do when they are struck down.

This was his statement:

According to the Potsdam agreement, Germans should be allowed to develop their opinion freely, and the latest developments proved that the People's Congress did not support unity between the East and the West, but was, rather, widening the gulf.

Jakob Kaiser didn't cave in under the brown terror of Hitler, either. Before the nazi dominance he was a young, energetic and socially "radical" leader of the German Catholic trade-union movement. His name and his energies and his ideas did not die under Hitler. There is documentary evidence that he worked well before the war started to organize an effective opposition to the nazis, and he continued during the war. Finally, in 1944, he was the key man of the Catholic trade-union circle which joined with a dozen other disaffected circles to form the July Attempt—that ill-fated effort that fell between revolution and conspiracy. In the attempt, Hermann Leuschner, the Social Democratic trade-union leader, and his comrade in the anti-Hitler effort, whose force, with that of Kaiser and the Catholic workers, made up the working-class sector of the complex front, was caught and killed by the nazis. Killed also were some of the Catholic labor leaders—and that shared "failure" brought a new solidarity to the German workers. But Kaiser managed skilfully and honorably to disappear within Germany.

When the war was won, Kaiser came up in Berlin, and he immediately became leader of the democratic Christian groups of Berlin and the Russian zone, and chairman of the Christian Democratic Union. Indeed, the CDU has long been the *only* party of any size not controlled by the communists in their zone of Germany. Kaiser had been a man of western Germany, and he certainly could have gone back to the Rhine or Ruhr and had a splendid career, but he fought it out in Russian Prussia, bravely.

The CDU was far "left"—as though that de-based designation meant anything. It accepted and favored a lot of "nationalization" and other anti-capitalist measures. It followed and advanced upon the most radical Center Party tradition in matters of breaking up estates, pushing unions, checking private financial and business centralization and control. It was quite a different party from the successor party to the Center and People's Party which has grown up powerfully in Bavaria and west Germany since the war, and which is relatively conservative. Different people gather different lessons from that fact. Many western German Catholic more conservative folk were furious. (Surely Kaiser did collaborate with the Russians and communists to the limit of principled self-respect.) Many cynical non-Catholic observers found evidence for a prejudice that Catholics would go along with anybody who let the Church keep a "certain" position for the cult. Those who knew of Kaiser and his colleagues might better have had confidence that they were flexible on temporal things, according to their temporality, while preserving a solid line on essential things, more set and firm as those matters transcend everyday practical choice and

[291]

reach to permanent matters of Faith and natural law and morality.

Flagrantly the Russians have driven away men governed by all faith and law and morality which is not Stalin's version of communism. It is not a matter of honestly working together in the Russian zone for the social well-being of the population. It has become a matter of spiritual identity. The last trace of a real plural party system has now been wiped out: the vast majority are without political, economic or social institutions, representation, effective voice. The communist SED is The Party.

The Russians symbolized what they were doing by the way they did it to Kaiser and the CDU leadership. The chairman would not capitulate, so he was kicked out. The vice-chairman, Ernst Lemmer, would not fawn and take the position as a puppet, and so he went. The principal party newspaper reacted as well, and so its paper supply was cut in two, and editors removed down the line until a subordinate man was found complaisant. The Russians searched long and hard for obscure cowards—or normal men—to use as a "directoriate" to replace the CDU chairman, vice-chairman and normal party executive structure. These replacements not only have to usurp the office, but also go abroad through Germany trying to assassinate Kaiser's character, heap odium on the genuine CDU policy, lie loudly and praise and glorify the wretched tyranny which the communists are a long, long way in placing over Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, and all the mighty German country which they are flattening into their great zone which Russia cuts off from the West.

Third Party Desertions

THE rôle of the Third Party in American politics has been splintering one. In comparatively modern times Teddy Roosevelt's Bull Moosers came the closest to electing a candidate, and gathered in enough Republican votes to elect the first Democratic President since Cleveland. The elder La Follette's "Progressives" supply a more typical group, exhibiting strength in Wisconsin and thereabouts and serving as a catch-all for independent voters fed up with the lethargy and venality of the two major parties. The Progressive Party long served to measure the degree of popular discontent—and to keep alive certain worthy political objectives—without ever building up to the point of affecting the balance between Republicans and Democrats. And, when the latter came forward as champions of a New Deal, the Progressives lost much of their *raison d'être*. Third parties under our system generally have too important a function to be sacrificed out of hand for fear of injuring either major candidate. They directly embody deeply held political views in many cases.

For months there has been talk of a Henry Wallace Third Party running in '48. It was built largely on the Stalinist myth about getting back to the Roosevelt foreign policy (continuing to appease Russia) and expected to attract not only a sizable bloc of labor votes but also a number of isolationist, pacifist and similarly inspired ballots, in addition to the Communist Party, the American Labor Party (confined pretty much to New York) and an undetermined number of consistent fellow-travelers. As such it constituted a heavy political threat. If Wallace chose to run and make a serious campaign, it was widely held that the Republicans would win no matter whom they nominated. And all this, of course, would be more than acceptable to a politbureau which everywhere presents the United States as the citadel of reactionary capitalism.

Can this factor entirely explain what has happened? Does the strong anti-Russian current now present in most American unions, as in the United States generally where there is any interest at all in world politics, account for the haste with which such figures as Frank Kingdon, Max Lerner and J. Raymond Walsh rejected the Wallace candidacy? The invitation to Wallace of the "Progressive Citizens of America" brought an immediate string of disavowals, expectedly from the Garment Workers of David Dubinsky and from the Auto Workers, rather startlingly from the late Sidney Hillman's Amalgamated Clothing Workers (core of the American Labor Party), and PM. The current prediction is that Wallace would garner little more than the straight Communist Party vote.

On the other hand, many indications point to renewed support for Truman in the ranks of American labor. The Taft-Hartley Act has hardly endeared the Republicans to the American worker. The possibility that Russia would seek to exploit a Republican victory is now an added bar to many labor votes. Can it be that a new bandwagon is in process of construction and that despite the personal gymnastics required, a number of political changelings want to be the first to clamber aboard?

Big-Time Community Planning

ONE of the most spectacular of the year's-end news stories emanates from the imposing industrial center of Pittsburgh. It tells of a new billion-dollar community program embracing four Pennsylvania counties inhabited by a million and a half people. The plans were drawn up and agreed upon by such important elements as industrial management; labor; federal, state and local government authorities; social workers; merchants; financiers. Local industry has assumed the bulk of the expenditures to make heavy-industry Pittsburgh a prosperous, healthy, model community,

free of smoke, well-housed and providing adequate medical, educational and recreational facilities for all. Taxpayers will account for a considerably lesser share. After settling on the specific projects which comprise the badly needed overall program, the directing spirits declared that it will be carried out regardless of general business conditions. The scheme is not directly aimed at forestalling a slump; rather it comprises the tasks which all agree must be completed in the interest of the community whether times are good or bad. That much of the contemplated expansion is on the part of coal and oil companies, Jones and Laughlin steel and the municipal airport—as well as for flood control, slum clearance, city parks and adequate new housing—reflects a welcome confidence in the nation's immediate future.

Two Messages

THAT the Holy Father should issue two encyclicals within one month is unusual. The tremendously different nature of these two is also worthy of comment: it is as though Saints Mary and Martha had insisted on one encyclical each as their Christmas present from him. For *Mediator Dei* which was published, in its Latin text, on November 29th (it is 15,000 words long, and the English translation has not yet been released), is a continuation, as it were, of the work begun in 1943 with the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* which dealt with the internal life and the dogmatic foundations of the Church. The second Encyclical, *Optatissima Pax*, of which an unofficial translation was carried in some of the New York papers of Sunday, December 20, is devoted entirely to the problem of class hatred, and to that of the betterment of labor relations.

Although the text of *Mediator Dei* is not yet entirely available in its entirety, enough excerpts have been released to give a general impression that His Holiness deals faithfully on the one hand with those who insist on exaggerated experiments with the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, especially in the Mass, and also deprecates "too much archeologism in liturgy." The Pope stresses the importance of the establishment of diocesan commissions to secure the proper observance of liturgical rules. It is to be hoped that such commissions will be able to prevent the speed-racing that takes place with such distressing frequency in parish churches.

Modern music is permitted, in its place, in the Church's services, but Gregorian is maintained in its proper honor. With reservations, it would seem that modern art is commended. "One cannot generally spurn and reject because of prejudice recent forms and styles, which are better adapted to the new material out of which they are fashioned," the encyclical reads. Again, certain limitations are stressed: "with wise balance" excessive realism, on the one hand, and exagger-

ated symbolism on the other, must be avoided. But the last word is commendatory: "It is altogether proper to give a free hand to that modern art which . . . serves the sacred places, and the sacred rites."

Eric Gill must be purring among the daisies, and even we transitory folk who are sadly apt to complain that what the Holy Father says for all is not enough for some, must be glad of this apparently outspoken approval of modern art, and modern media, as against a continual copying of ancient models. Apart from any other consideration, the giving of so much space and attention in his encyclical to artistic questions enhances the value of art itself. Artists are kittle-kattle, said Karl Marx, and should have no part in the state. Not so, says the Vicar of Christ. When the world is scared and hungry, and teetering on its pins, he still finds it right and proper to speak at great and grave length of art, of colors and forms. And he is glad to approve the possibility that modern art, too, "may join its voice to the admirable canticle of glory which the old masters raised in past centuries."

But if Mary is given her meed in *Mediator Dei*, *Optatissima Pax* is a sad and a strong message for Martha's heart and ear. Here is, alas, no talk of glory: the words the Holy Father chooses are heavy, solemn adjectives: dolorous, distressing, miserable, and, twice *bitter*. "The social classes, mutually agitated by a bitter hatred," says the Pope, and later speaks of "our soul oppressed by a great bitterness." He condemns entirely those who "aggravate and batten on the misery of the proletarian classes. Not by tumult and fratricidal massacre can lost good be retained, and those who thoughtlessly raise up the crowd, exciting it to sedition and offenses against the liberties of others, do not mitigate the poverty of the people, but increase and provoke it to extreme ruin."

In urging the rich to put the common good before private profit, he reminds them of the desperate state of society. If they refuse, then civilization itself will come to pieces in their hand. He warns the workers against supporting the anti-social policies of those "who are not lacking, who with secret and strict order and without justice . . . have a premeditated plan." He begs the workers, instead, to cooperate with mutual understanding. He speaks of the Child Jesus, "which wails in the manger," and these sad utterances are in line with the Pope's recent warning, that he would not be able to proclaim the Holy Year in Rome unless there were a greater measure of national and European tranquillity. The grim language of this encyclical is a definite indication of great Vatican activity on behalf of European reconstruction: that recovery is the only alternative, as it is the only antidote, to chaos or communism. And the Holy Father says so as plainly as Secretary Marshall.

Letter from a Replaced Person

The reactions of an Austrian
home again after America

Erik von Kuebnelt-Leddihn

Wechselnde Pfade
Schatten und Licht
Alles ist Gnade
Fuerchte dich nicht!

(From a popular Austrian postcard)

AT LAST I have found some time for recollection and some added time to write you a letter from far away Austria, which today, in spite of "Panamerican" and TWA, is much further away from the United States than it was in 1939. It may seem to you that I am living on another planet and that there is some sort of interstellar space between us, and in a sense, of course, you are quite right.

I don't know where to start my account, but I'll commence on the lowest possible plane and reply to the stereotyped but never answered question: "How do you do?" Well, I am still very happy since I am living in a very incongruous and fantastic dream world with luxuries and discomforts almost equally mixed. Just imagine being woken up in the morning by a butler who carefully places a toothbrush on your glass of water and then to reflect on the millimeters of the immensely precious tooth-paste which should be placed on the nylon bristles of the Honorable American Tooth-brush. Here, in the country, servants and rooms are no problem but an egg is very much of a luxury and such a minor accident as a lost button, a spoiled postcard or a missing comb might amount to a major tragedy. Just the other day I roamed the provincial capital for a solid hour without finding a plain postcard and I certainly don't have to describe the groceries serving a nation living on one-third of the necessary calories. Apart from a few excursions in neighboring zones and provinces I lead an entirely sedentary life and yet am subjected to a slow, but constant, loss of weight which in turn imperceptibly saps one's strength and nervous system. The placid Austrians have developed a noxious irritability which, needless to say, is due not only to nutritive deficiencies but also to nine years of purgatory and nine years of hell filled with a bitterness, a helpless rage, physical sufferings and sorrows beyond tears which never will be forgotten in their lifetime.

Moving around in the old, familiar places makes the long, American interlude disappear in

my mind; the decade in the New World has been telescoped into a short period. As long as one does not see the hideous ruins in the cities, cruelly torn houses and burnt out churches, the eternal landscape strengthens the illusion. The mountains are on the same spot, the farm buildings rise above the same meadows, the rivers have not changed their courses. Looking down from Carlsberg over the Glan Valley, especially in the evening when the sun sets over the craggy hills of the Italo-Yugoslav boundary, or on Sunday mornings when the mist is still covering the valley floor and the church bells chime in from near and far, one has a feeling of quietness, peace and satisfaction; one is tempted to see in the cruel happenings of the past a morbid interlude instead of a ghastly overture, and one needs the full strength of reason to remember reality. In Vienna, and even in Klagenfurt, the provincial capital claimed by the "Yugoslav Democratic Federal People's Republic," the illusions are few because the gashing wounds so visible to the eye are far from being healed. . . .

Yet the wounds in the heart of people are the ones which matter more than the devastation wrought on brick and mortar, though sometimes one would prefer to have perished rather than to see a piece of architecture built for all earthly eternity pounded brutally into rubble. After all, we mortals have to die sooner or later but a cathedral like St. Stephen's in Vienna belongs to our common heritage, to mankind in general and to Christendom in particular. Still, to the rank and file, the personal agonies stand out in their memory more vividly; and every city and every village had its trials and tribulations. In Klagenfurt shamelessly disemboweled ruins are still witnesses of a senselessly cruel war; doors on upper floors open into rooms without sidewalls, grass and weeds grow in deserted kitchens dissected by blockbusters, undamaged facades, masking ceilingless apartments piled with rubble, stand in mute irony; a community hall, with a gaudy entrance and faded posters from years bygone pasted over the gateposts, lifts its charred beams to Heaven. Yet all these fragments of tortured architecture are merely visible reminders of human suffering, of indelible memories and everlasting scars in the hearts of those who went

through the man-made hell of aerial warfare. The German masters of Austria attributed no importance to this city, and so American flyers, naïvely trying to disrupt rail communications, could bomb it at leisure in broad daylight neither molested by flak nor pursued by fighters. Some of the inhabitants hid in nearby forests or spent the day in neighboring villages, aimlessly wandering around until darkness fell over the smoldering tormented city, but most of the people were forced by an iron discipline imposed by the SS and the SD to work in a factory, to sit in an office, to attend to their patients or to teach in school until the sirens howled and the airshelters, more death trap than refuge, offered their mocking "protection." These were the ones who had the grim choice between the gallows of the brown régime and another variety of death administered by the celestial chefs from God's Own Country—death through sizzling, broiling, grilling, mashing; death as a result of suffocation due to the sudden disappearance of oxygen "sucked away" by fiercely burning bombs. And those returning from their idle peregrinations with vacant eyes were not spared the shock of seeing again their beloved ones in abstruse mutilation or of SS men gloating over the bodies of foreign slave laborers slaughtered by their own gallant allies. These tales are still alive, are told and retold, and the horror of these days, of the last weeks and months of a war with its fate already sealed, with victors and vanquished clearly designated by history, continues to be mirrored in the faces of those whose lips recount the inferno of these senseless ordeals. The station with its ticket office, its baggage department and waiting rooms, its turnstiles and time-tables was pounded to rubble, the houses around were turned into flaming graves, but the rails, the fatal rails, were always quickly restored in a few hours by eagerly waiting repair crews working like beavers while viaducts and bridges, strategically so important in an alpine country, were not even touched.

You might probably argue that there were nazis among these victims and, of course, there were. Those smallish boys with grave faces you now can see quite adroitly balancing their weight on one leg and two slim sticks, that pale young girl with her cleverly draped but empty sleeve, may possibly have been members of the HJ or the BDM. And, naturally, there were adults too who voted YES in April, 1938, not because they had to, but because they really wanted to, and some of them repented their action for moral reasons, and others did not. Of the latter a few were just naïve and stupid and never realized what the whole circus was all about, but others, supreme amorlists, did know; and others again, with their accepted moral standards, with all their intellectual gifts and all their information, just did not

have the courage to stand up, to sever their ties, to "jump off the express train"—to quote the late J. P. Goebbels. But, my dear friends, it is easy from the snug security of transatlantic shores to praise and to condemn, forgetting that these people were faced with something grimmer than a Kierkegaardian decision; in the later stages of the game, when the Gorgonic features of the "system" became fully unveiled, there was no such thing as an elegant withdrawal with regrets or polite notes; usually there was nothing left but the simple alternative between position, riches, connections or at least life; and, not just anonymity, but a slow, ignominious death, coupled with dire poverty, if not jail, for relatives.¹ And often mere circumstances have played a rôle in determining the *present* legal status of a person; we know of "non-nazis" who were refused membership in the Party because, as a human material, they were not even good enough for the NSDAP, and of "nazis" who actively, at the risk of their lives, participated in the conspiracy of July, 1944, whose threads went even beyond Austria, and who now spend months if not years in Austrian, Allied-sponsored, concentration camps.

★

It is well known to archaeologists that the sites of antique cities can best be discovered by aerial photographs which divulge more clearly the existence and the pattern of forgotten townships than the most meticulous search on the surface of the earth. America during World War II was a balcony from which one could contemplate the European scene very "objectively" and pronounce well balanced judgments over whole nations, whole social layers and political groups. Looking back at my sojourn in the United States I must confess that with a fair amount of experience, effort and reflection it was always possible to find the truth, that one could always unravel the skein of cause and effect, of action and reaction, of interconnection and interdependence. But there was something we over there completely lost sight of—not only the radio-commentators and the bitter horde of she-patriots in grey uniforms with flashing eyes and crimson, dried out lips, but also our humble selves—the fact, that even nazis and communists are human beings, all unique, all irreplaceable, all floating between God and Satan. The picture from the plane, or the balcony, naturally, is correct in its own ways, it shows up the pattern and the "system," it tells us how the nightmare "worked"—but *existentially* it is quite untrue, and all by itself it amounts to a lie. Now, after returning to Austria the pattern for me literally has been dissolved into numberless individual records, and I feel like a supercilious student of theology (an orthodox Thomist of the "Information, please!" type)

who has been ordained and sent down to do very ordinary parish work. Of course, the pattern has not lost its intrinsic value; it is true but does not contain the whole truth. God, moreover, looks primarily at man as a person, not as a member in a group or as a screw in a machine. Once we stand before His throne no membership card, no passport, no party badge will influence His judgment one way or another. And let us not fool ourselves; the three repenting Catholic ex-nazis condemned, executed and sacrilegiously cremated at Nuremberg, are virtually saved, which cannot be said with such certainty of every party secretary of the Christian Democratic Union. Frank, the Butcher of Warsaw, a convert, will probably some day share the Beatific Vision with many of his victims from Auschwitz.

Yet this does not mean that one man is as good as any other man. The repetition of that porcine and nihilistic phrase that nobody is irreplaceable leads to monumental crimes. How could something unique ever be replaced? Indeed, the thing which impresses the homecomer most is just the glaring fact of human inequality, of human baseness and heroism, of cowardice and courage. But if we were forced to *generalize*, the picture would be quite dreary. Weakness, begotten by fear, seems to be the outstanding characteristic of mankind, whereas true wickedness and malice, as well as sanctity, especially heroic sanctity, are rare. The paralyzing effects of the Cloud of Fear heralding the advent of tyranny have masterfully been described by Ernst Jünger in his "*Auf den Marmorklippen*" (Hamburg, 1939!). Today this Cloud of Fear, though coming from another direction, is again with us, and its corroding, debasing, dissolving and demoralizing influence is to be felt from Korea to the Atlantic ports of France.

Life over here is life under a magnifying glass; at least this is the impression of those who come from the Great American Shelter. Everything seems to be big, coarse, crude, oversized, extreme, loud and obvious. Europe, more than ever, is the Continent of Absolutes. All this claptrap and cackling about the Common Man, this Rousselean and deist mouthing about the noble savage with a golden heart and a friendly grin behind every bank grill, lathe, office desk and soda counter, vanishes into nothingness. The human devils and the saints, though a minority, are the "hard fact," they show that the pendulum can swing, that it does swing, that there is Heaven and Hell, that there is Christ and Satan. Friedrich Ritter von Lama, the Catholic historian who went in February, 1944, with his silver hair and a rosary around his neck to the block, was not just an "average guy," a "fellow like you and me." And, needless to say, the dainty hands which painted the lampshades of human skin belonged to an-

other type of human being than those which penned the last Christian messages of Schurik Schmoll. Yet one has not even to look at such obvious extremes; there is the retired officer who clandestinely listened to the Russian radio but had not the courage to tell a close friend the good news that his son was a prisoner but alive, while a simple woman, a stranger, living four hundred miles away, braved her life by writing a letter to the desperate parents.

But even some of the diabolists perished grimly, as grimly as if they were among the saints. Many of the weak ones came under the wheels of the juggernaut of history, and others escaped. Looking around one must come to the conclusion that *this* life down here is pitiless, senseless and thoroughly amoral. Over here nothing is left of the notions of the Sunday School Reader or of Hollywood, of moralizing non-conformist sermons or even of the strange, pagan morality of Greek tragedy. Under these circumstances all there is left to a thinking person is the clear and inescapable alternative of belief (at least in a *deus absconditus*) and utter cynicism—a cynicism neighboring on hopping, howling madness. It is precisely this total lack of connection between individual worth and individual fate which disposes of a whole score of materialistic superstitions and creates an atmosphere which, one has to admit, is not altogether deplorable. The theological values which in America are still so obscured, if not buried under a mountain of trivialities, are lying here almost naked and look as frightening as an abdomen without its frontal wall. The illusions have broken down. The myth of the bourgeois virtues has been thoroughly exploded. There is only the Cross. *Stat crux dum volvitur orbis*. The alternative: the insanity of nothingness.

(Yet on a diet of 1500 calories the body revolts against the specter of integral despair, and the physical craving for optimism interferes with mental processes. Aneuilh's brilliant, nihilistic yet deeply religious (though blasphemous) "Romeo and Juliette" not only frightened the Austrian communists but even our Catholic *Spiessbürger*. Hence the surprising failure of this play at the Vienna *Akademietheater*. Confer Romano Guardini, *Unterscheidung des Christlichen*, Mainz, 1935. August Zechmeister in his *Das Herz und das Kommende*, (*Von der Einsamkeit des Christen in dieser Zeit*), Vienna, 1946, cover even more terrain. This amazing book is dedicated to a woman he loved who was murdered in an insane asylum by the nazis. It deals with the position of the Christian in the days to come, his loneliness, his martyrdom, his sadness, death in solitude. It foresees a catacomb Christianity based on the family and contemplates the possibility of a Church deprived of most of

its priests and bishops, the type of Catholic organization we have seen in Japan during the Tokugawa Period. This slim volume has caused raised eyebrows in Rome and we doubt that it will find its way to the American Catholic public; there is nothing hearty and hale about it and its spirit is poles apart from "Going My Way.")

Here one has to drink one's Christianity straight. This is very good and wholesome, but one still lifts the terrible glass with a trembling hand and a tearful eye to the lips—the terrible glass filled to the brim with the terrible Christian verities. Still, only a hypocrite would insist that this change towards greater clarity and greater cleanliness is sheer delight. There is the pagan in all of us, and the fake world of yesterday with its fake consolations continues to fill us with nostalgia; the almost complete absence of visible co-ordination between the mocking injustice of this world and the justice of the next creates a melancholia and a distress which are not surprising. Human nature has an innate thirst for wholeness and perfection, for harmony and balance. As a result we see even among believers an increase of that Christian *Schwermut*, that calm sadness about which Romano Guardini wrote more than ten years ago. This great mourning over the beyondness of justice, truth and peace is accentuated by the presence of the Cloud of Fear, the gnawing knowledge about the resumption of all suffering, the cognition that the ordeals we went through are a mere prelude to horrors far more heartbreaking than we have seen hitherto. You can see his sadness mirrored in the eyes of a man contemplating the house he loves, still spared by the fury of the war, and in which his family has dwelt for generations, you can sense it in the kiss between husband and spouse and in the faces of parents stroking hesitatingly their children's heads. Our possessions, human or material, are slowly assuming an illusory character; it seems that the objects near to our heart have already a dead look. The silver sparkles no more, the portraits are lifeless, the windows are blind. . . .

My son whom I have met after a long separation is in his tenth year and, being a responsible father, I decided that I have to tell him the "facts of life"—but not those you're probably thinking of. (How many children at a tender age were taught these facts by marauding hordes of Tartars, Buryats and Mongols, most of them diseased, who raped them, their mothers, or grandmothers?) I was alluding to the central fact of life—not to the beginning but to the goal of life, to death. *Media vita in morie sumus*. It was death and God and the other life, life eternal, I had in mind. And this indeed is a more delicate matter than the flowers and the bees.²

I told you about the Glan Valley and its soothing illusion of peace, quiet and beauty. Yet I

have only to turn my head and look southwards to see our *memento mori* in all its glory, the Karawanken with the mighty Kôsuta in its center. The Iron Curtain at many places runs through the plains, along insignificant little rivulets, through flat meadows or stagnant swamps, but here it is visible reality. The Karawanken look precisely as an American boy from the Middle West might imagine a mountain chain looks like: straight, steep, a series of cliffs from horizon to horizon, menacing, treeless and weatherbeaten, a hostile and forbidding rocky symphony in gray. On its crest runs the boundary dividing Austria from Yugoslavia, Central Europe from the Balkans, Anglo-Saxonry from Slavdom, America, my daughter's country, from Asia—since Europe, my son's continent, in a sense, is no more.

★

This mountain wall faces north, and thus the sun reaches it only at daybreak and in the evening. At noontime there is something dark, sinister and crouching about this stony barrier, but, when it is lit up, its sharp and knifelike details can be seen in cruel perspective. And tales of cruelty indeed come over the summits and passes of the Karawanken; these fragments of the great Cloud of Fear are carried by sudden swarms of expelled and uprooted German-speaking peasants from Yugoslavia, by packs of hollow-cheeked, crazy eyed men with bare feet and ragged wives, torn from their ancestral soil and thrown into the bottomless poverty of the *Sammellager*, the collection camps; they are also carried by Slovenes coming on the sly, with a knife between their teeth and bitterness etched in their faces, members of a victorious but enslaved nation betrayed by its noble allies. From these and from others one gets the mosaic pieces for the full picture, a picture of revenge, sadism and choking horror; of hundreds of men led up to the Pokorje Mountains and clubbed to death like beached seals; of others standing up to their neck, over night, in fecal matter; of men and women forced literally to lick the boots of their guards; of others made to eat their "meals" day in day out from pigs' troughs in a kneeling position, their hands on their backs. News seeps through piecemeal, sometimes in dark hints in censored letters, sometimes in cryptic messages on slips smuggled over the border, sometimes in garbled versions transmitted from mouth to mouth: "Joseph is with his mother (in Heaven)," "The Lord has been kind to Francis" (by letting him die), "Anna has at last gone home" (to her Creator). Of course, Archbishop Stepinac is a great martyr but, to tell the truth, he is too much *en vue* to suffer as abysmally as the vast majority of the 700,000 inmates of the concentration camps of the Yugoslav Democratic Federal People's Republic.

These happenings affect Austrians deeply, much more so, at least, than they affect the enthusiastic subscribers of the *Churchman*. Carniola, behind the Karawanken, is not some strange and far away country; it formed part of Austria since the 14th century. The ties of blood and friendship could never be eliminated by a boundary which transformed a mountain chain beloved by tourists and shepherds into a dolorous border and then into a wall of tears. Wives and husbands, parents and children have been separated, and sometimes left without news for years. Today there is a certitude in every American family about the fate of their beloved ones but not so in the East or in the South. And these incertitudes bear down more heavily than the grimmest truth. The innocents are, here again, the ones who suffer most heavily—those who have resisted nazi demands without joining the Red Star of Tito, those who have gained prestige by their manliness and decency but have declined to exchange one yoke for another. Red has proved the most ideal color to cover a brown taint or the dirty marks of collaboration. The drama we witness here is in the great Christian style of Claudel's "*L'otage*" in which the evildoers are rewarded and the good are punished. And the drama is not ended yet because there are the dark shadows of w.w III. coupled with the Southern neighbor's demand for the heart of Carinthia, its plains, its capital, a demand which if ever fulfilled, will end in a new migration into the nowhere, in empty houses and farmyards, in the growth of the Great Desert with bats flying through broken windows and masterless, mangy horses galloping over fallow fields returning to wilderness.

Yes, the innocents are bound to suffer again. It is truly the absence of this—worldly justice which hits the homecomer with full dramatic force; the Great Fiction, the materialist's consolation, his notion of an existing ethical order on this earth has been disproved and dissolved into nothingness. Here the Bad Man gets his Mounties, Floyd Murgatroyd evicts the pale widow with his horsewhip, Horatio Alger dies poor in a concentration camp and Dick Tracy is tortured much more fiendishly than Mrs. Pruneface ever dared hope, with no radio car coming to his aid in the terrible last agony. Martyrdom taking place in solitude and anonymity is not even properly publicized as in the good, old days of the living torch and the arena. There is nothing left but the Cross—often the Cross in obscurity and loneliness. And in educating my son I am certainly going to excise lovingly and brutally every thought, every notion of an expected earthly justice. Hope is a virtue which has to be placed *with reason* in matters where it belongs—in God and Life Eternal, not in Lake Success, the wisdom of the Foreign Relations Committee or the golden

hearts of the members of the Politbureau. If my son has a chance to grow up, and this chance is not too bright in our Salaminian Age, he must be fully conscious of the fact that this is a vale of tears and that the *Salve Regina*, the new '48 Studebaker Model and the glories of the UN notwithstanding, is based on reality and not on the dreamworld of enchanting nursery rhymes. I must teach him to practice the Christian virtues, but at the same time to face honestly and squarely a world suffering manifestly not only from all the dire results of original sin but also from the consequences of a *tremendous apostasy*.

★

My dear friends, how many of us, and I among them, have thought between 9 o'clock Mass and a good breakfast (with Wheaten, Maxwell House Coffee and grade A bacon) that it's fine to be a Catholic, that others in good faith but not of our "persuasion" (What nauseating expression!) can and will be saved, and that the world *extra ecclesiam* has its charms; though further away from perfection than the still imperfect *mundus Catholicus*, after all, it is peopled, by human beings with immortal souls created in the image of God. We were even inclined to think that without the Church and without Christianity life would be going on somehow; we admitted in our speculations that were the Mystical Body to disappear, something important, something valuable would be missing, that we *personally* would prefer not to live in such a world, but that Life would continue one way or the other. After all, there were thousands of years of Chinese, Sumerian, Egyptian, Japanese culture without people having an inkling of the "Crucial Fact"—Crucifixion. They were living "somehow" and, more than that, they produced great cultures. Granted! Our baby aged a year and a half is blissfully ignorant of death and eternity, of God and Heaven, blissfully ignorant and, to all appearances, neither unhappy, nor desperate nor even, objectively, without hope. The answer to both arguments is the same: mankind or the individual in their childhood cannot reach the greater altitudes we have in mind, but they can manage "somehow." Here we must recall Wust's definition of man as an *animal insecurem* as compared to the beasts, the *animalia securum*. A child in its babyhood, in a sense, is surely not beyond the animal stage.

While humanity entered with Golgotha a new era with our present crisis and dotage as the last stage in its development, the "tools" provided by technology are now entirely out of proportion with the spiritual and moral level of mankind. A man intent on perfecting a weapon while morally on the downgrade invites disaster. A sub-machine gun in the hands of a five-year-old or of

a cynical dotard invites disaster. A stick of dynamite in the possession of a mentally decaying atheistic moron invites disaster. I insist on these somewhat odd examples because the great religious apostasy is accompanied by a flight from reason, a flight which certainly could not surprise our Thomist friends. The net result of these catastrophes is not a mephistophelian satanism superseding a *sancta simplicitas*, but an idiotic amorality and demented wickedness. Neither in a Cesare Borgia nor in a Good Emperor Ferdinand do we find the personification of our age, but in an imaginary paranoiac gorilla armed with handgrenades. The final result is murder and suicide.

★

It is also in these matters of reason and morals that one sees over here the magnitude of the American defeat. I am convinced that you know me well enough to realize that I don't rejoice in this débâcle, neither actively nor with a gloating Germanic *Schadenfreude*.³ You surely must admit that my "vested interest" lies on the side of Anglo-Saxonry. And although I am not an American citizen I am, what's more, the father of a small American and a denizen of Christendom which comprises America no less than Austria. All the more I am depressed by the sight of a disaster which must be attributed to politicians rather than to military men. I hope I am not surprising you by mentioning the fact that *we* (you and I and everybody believing in God, in freedom and in the uniqueness of the human person) were on the losing side and that the totalitarians won the war. They won it militarily. They won it psychologically and, in a curious sense, even, "morally." The real nazis feel that they were merely outnumbered and outproduced and that it was another totalitarian power which broke their spine; they look at the two wars in a France and the one in the desert as a mere picnic; they are convinced that the air warfare was started by the West (a view strangely confirmed by Liddell Hart's confession) and that the carnage perpetrated by the Anglo-Saxons deprives them of any right to show moral indignation about anything they've done themselves. The aerial exploits of the RAF and AAF had, on top of it all, been gleefully featured by the Allied press, whereas the nazi atrocities had successfully been kept secret.

In order to feel the gravity of the disaster one should not only visit the endless number of DP-camps, visible signs of the great democratic and liberal defeat in Central and Eastern Europe, but one also ought to meet the GI's in Austria—where they are fairly happy, somewhat insecure and quite "lost." They are not here any more to watch the Austrians but to watch one of their

former allies. The whole official tenor of the occupation authorities, needless to say, has entirely changed since May, 1945. A brutal historical process has reeducated some of the victors more than they reeducated the Austrians; there is now on their part a decided effort to win and to please, and this also seems to be the situation in Germany. All that jabbering of the OWI, about "Allied Unity," "One World" and "Total Democracy"—including the newsreels showing President and Prime Minister sealing the Atlantic Charter with the intonation of Anglican church hymns—all that's gone and forgotten. Any reference to it causes indifference, sarcasm, if not outright irritation. The front-line GI's have gone too, and what is left are green recruits who marvel at the beauties of Alpine Austria but wonder why they are here, while the more intelligent ones among them realize the fate which possibly awaits them; they sense that some day the steamroller is going to be set in motion, that those in Vienna will be trapped and that the rest of them won't even have a dog's chance to stage another Dunkirk because neither their representatives nor their government dare to tell their constituents and taxpayers the awful truth about the real outcome of W.W. II. These soldiers know that they can't withdraw from the world's strategically most important area, that they are in for a new Pearl Harbor on a gigantic scale and that the Army Dependents will play the sad rôle of ideal hostages. These men (and women and children) are in the same boat as the rank and file of those whom they "police," "administrate" or "reeducate" without having the advantage of quickly turning their coats once the catastrophe is at hand. And if they don't fall in the first skirmishes they will either disappear in the limitless wastes of Eurasia, leaving nothing but a question mark behind them or, perhaps, be liberated some day by an atom bomb. Political chemistry, as the Europeans are aware, knows of three painful alternatives—Nazism or Cremation, Communism or Liquidation, Democracy or Vaporization. Few people doubt that, America, if it need be, will, in self-defense, tear Europe limb from limb.

On the other hand there is very little confidence in America (or in other democracies) since any election at any time can completely reverse the whole trend of foreign policy. Even you have no real means to prosecute or to punish those irresponsible politicians in your own country who partly misused the military victory and partly threw its fruits away—in a democracy you cannot wreak vengeance on some "Crown Prince" for the misdeeds of his deceased father. I doubt that you remember how your representatives voted two years ago. One can't reason or moralize with a hydra.⁴

Yet whatever the character of Anglo-Saxon

government, those among us who know, see and understand are fully conscious of the fact that our lives hang in the most precarious balance, that war, death and slavery may be here overnight, that the dark wall of the Karawanken might symbolically fall over us and bury us among its boulders. The only "way out" of this situation is ignorance (oh, blessed state of ignorance!) or the solemn treaty with death which is the mysterious key to true freedom. "*Qui a appris à mourir, il a des appris à servir. Le savoir mourir nous affranchit de toute subjection et contrainte.*" (Montaigne, *Essais*. I. 20.)

Such knowledge is more general than one might suppose; indeed, among the younger generation between the Rhine and the Pripet swamps (and even beyond) there is a conscious and widespread acceptance of death, a receptiveness heightened by a desperate material plight. Mind you, even if the whole problem of an aggressive USSR could be eliminated by some magic, the "remainder" of the "peace" would make another war sooner or later inevitable. The treaties and the blueprints, from Teheran to Potsdam, have been designed with so much stupidity and infamy, with such a monumental amount of suicidal ignorance, pettiness and intellectual cowardice, with such a complete disregard of all laws of ethics and history, of geography and economics, of national psychology and plain common sense, that an explosion would be as inevitable as the one prepared by that group of criminally insane who built the Europe of 1919.⁵

The menacing character of the Russian pressure is greatly due to the fact that it is directed against an area not only materially devastated and ravaged but also spiritually bankrupt. It was always rank madness to believe that democracy could supplant nazism and fascism. (As if the Gironde could take over the heritage of Robespierre or the fashions of the gay twenties supersede those of 1947!) Today the galvanized corpses of the so-called democratic parties fill the air with pestilential smells; these parties negate communism, they serve as a sop to Western occupation powers, they vaguely represent the great thirst for freedom of all those not paralyzed in their thinking by cold and starvation, but they have no dynamism of their own.

Naturally, those who vegetate on an animal level feel nothing but hate and despair and are going to side with those who can feed, house or excite them with a new intoxicating fanaticism. For them, freedom has often the character of a luxury. Yet the victims of Teheran, Yalta, Moscow and Potsdam are so numerous, their bitterness so limitless, their hatreds so explosive, that anybody or anything might succeed in mobilizing them to the most evil deeds. They are also the dynamite likely to blast the trails on which the

East will advance once its hour has struck. And they are the ones who have no interest whatsoever in preserving the status quo, whose last hope lies in preventing the present situation to "freeze," to become solid and permanent. They are the ones who will start w.w. III. if nobody else will. In a sense they also are our grim masters over life and death, the cornered, ragged despots of our and your destinies.

★

After all these lamentations and sorrowful observations I feel the curious urge to make a rather personal confession: this life that I am living here is the most wonderful life I ever had and, were it not for my knowledge of the great suffering, the *unbearable* suffering around me, I would be the happiest man under the sun! But keep in mind that I am neither a DP nor a white collar worker in Vienna. I am living in a very lonely spot in the country, not only close to Mother Earth but also close to her resources. I am often hungry, but never starving. I have to walk five miles to the next small town where I can buy neither chocolate, nor socks, neither buttons, nor even paper clips, not to mention clothes or nourishing foodstuffs. And although I am starting to freeze, in our place there is always one or the other room well heated. I am dreading the winter with its loneliness, its lack of warmth and light (from 5 to 7 electricity is often turned off and there are neither candles nor kerosene), but spring has its wonderful prospects. The simple sensation that the days will be getting longer is something we all are looking forward to. Cocoa in a CARE package amounts to a festival, and every single day spent with my family is a wonderful gift from God for which I am truly grateful. A sunny day, a view through the pines, a visit to an old church in a nearby village, a good letter from American friends is a real event. Believe me, this life isn't bad at all; it is a very good life indeed; it is something much better and saner than a metropolitan existence in the United States. It would be "ideal" if only the Night of the Long Knives were not round the corner, if only the Karawanken were not to bury us under their rocks, if only all Austrians, all Central and East-Europeans could share my humble standards of living. Yet I have only to look into the mirror to see how my real face slowly comes to the fore and the adipose tissues accumulated over long years through the consumption of Triple Decker Sandwiches, Chocolate Banana Splits and Porterhouse Steaks gradually disappear. In my leather shorts, hobnailed boots and green jacket, unlike at rush hours in the Lexington Ave. Express, I feel my old self again. Even in the shadow of the Košuta I have no wish to return to normalcy.

But is an American metropolitan or suburban

existence normal at all? I am enough of a traveler and historian to know that it is as abnormal as "life" in the hermetically sealed totalitarian states of Eurasia. The poverty, the penury, the insecurity and the scarcity in which the *rural* Austrian lives today comes far nearer to historical normalcy than that Life in Plenty which finds its most concrete expression in the opulence of well-stocked Five & Tens and grocerias. The great inflation of material values which is the essence of modern mass production, has certainly not brought lasting happiness to anybody. To bring us joy our earthly goods must be scarce and obtainable only through considerable toil and effort. Of course, I am not thinking of Vienna and even less so of the tortured cities of Germany and Poland, and even while praising our sub-medieval standards I have to take the shadows of the things to come into my calculations; probably we are only enjoying a precarious breathing spell, as Serbia after the Battle of the Kossovo field, or as Carthage between the two last Punic Wars. But even contemplating these grim prospects I am not so sure whether a Christian life menaced by death, exile and poverty is something abnormal. It is difficult to doubt that the hundred years between Waterloo and Sarajevo represent a nadir in the spiritual strength of Catholicism; we have even to ask ourselves, like that old abbé in Bernanos's "Diary of a Country Priest," whether the Pope's rightful place were not rather in the Mamertinian jail than in the Vatican, and whether there is not something positively scandalous about Christians not being persecuted, but tolerated instead with a mixture of pity, ill humor and contempt.

★

Now it has become rather cold and in the big cities the specter of a winter without fuel actually obscures the fear of Number Three. Warmth is such a basic feature of animal existence; in a sense it is even more basic than food or drink with their more intermittent character. Death from a physical point of view is cold and darkness. And it is cold and darkness which descends over Vienna, Graz and Linz, over Innsbruck, Salzburg and Klagenfurt, places comprising almost half of our population. The night and the snow will envelop starving Austria as a shroud does a corpse. For hours upon a time the electric light will be switched off and there remain the hunger, the fear and the gloominess of the dusk.

The darkness is now less complete since the full moon radiates its yellow-green light over the snow-covered Eastern Alps. When I wake up in a clear night I can see the severe contours of the Karawanken and the vanity of all earthly striving comes cruelly to my mind. Even if the Karawanken won't bury us, then the septic virus of the

German cadaver will poison and kill the Old World. The decline and the decomposition of the heart of Europe will drag down all of us into an abyss of chaos, revenge and new tyranny.

Looking back at America and those years of my stay there, so near and yet so unbelievably far, it becomes difficult to revive the full meaning of the phrases whose din and clamor once filled the ether, the columns of the papers and the pages of quickly written books. Wandering through the glorious ruins of St. Stephen's in Vienna, or among the pulverized dwellings in the outer boroughs (shattered mostly on the 7th anniversary of the *Anschluss* as a gesture of "moral indignation," which killed numberless innocents) one can only recall with a smile names like those of Johannes Steel, J. P. Goebbels, Henry Wallace, Baldur V. Schirach, Lisa Sergio, Herr Bürckel, Raymond Swing—the names of such brave democratic patriots as Elsa Maxwell or Samuel Grafton or of such brave nazis as Herr Rosenberg or Herr Wirsing. Their words, their ideas, their prophecies—gone! Gone! And the Brown House and the old Freedom House with the "Free World," the DNB and the OWI, the Atlantic Charter, Feder's Program and Quentin Reynolds, Virginio Gayda and Leland Stowe, the Millenium of the Third Reich, the Century of the Common Man, Mr. Willkie's "One World," "Freedom from Want and Fear," the *Aufnordung* and the impregnable *Festung Europa* . . . gone and forgotten! Russian neo-democracy with epaulets, Benes's cosmopolitan liberalism, "Mein Kampf," the "City of Man" and all the resolutions propounded at Madison Square Garden, and all the dreams and all the nonsense and superstitions, the lies and the illusions which obscured all thought now lie deflated in the mud. All that remains here on earth are the eternal verities and not the superficialities of the mob leaders.

Ultimately it is possible to nourish some sort of mild optimism even for this material world, but hardly for ourselves, for our generation. It must also be conceded that the Russians don't look like devils and that they have immortal souls, as do the democrats, the liberal conservatives or the nazis. (In the Russian zone, though, they are referred to solely as "fascists" or as "Hitlerites.") In the not too distant future a "genuine national socialism" might make its début under the patronage of a "genuine democracy." Still, the Russians have promising faces and we know that graces are also given outside of the Church. It is quite possible that the Vandal who slew Saint Augustine (*the saint of our time and place!*) died in Christ, or that this barbarian's son became a saintly priest. Even in earthly relations there is no absolute reason for despair. A certain degree of poverty means freedom, and physical death is unavoidable: even those who reach the

safety of the United States might some day lie cold and stiff with paint on their cheeks in the "slumber room" of a "mortician" heading for a "memorial park." Yet once this Augean Stable in which we are living is cleaned out, and humanity returns to faith and reason, a happier age for another generation is still within the realm of possibility:

*Le temps est trouble, le temps se esclarsira
Après la pluie l'on entend le beau temps
Après noises et grans divers côtés
Paix adviendra et maleur cessera. . . .
Mais entre deulx que mal l'on souffrera!*

(*Chanson de Marguerite d'Autriche*).

TO ERIK VON KUENHELT-LEDDIHN'S despairing and angry article The Editors append a few comments—a strict minimum of cautionary remarks. We print his article because we know, and want Americans to know, that there are many despairing and angry people in Europe, but that does not mean that what they think and say—in their anger and despair—is impartial, clear, orderly and objectively true. It would, indeed, be amazing were that the case. We bring this searching European voice into the concert of voices debating the results of the war, describing the responsibilities of the future, because Americans, more than any other people in the world, need to hear all the voices that are speaking anywhere—in order that America's action may be based on knowledge. What we do is important for the future of the world. We must take into account, of course, but weigh most carefully, the disappointments that have come with the end of the war. Do they constitute "America's defeat," as Mr. Von Kuehnelt-Leddihn asserts? Or are they not simply the result of the fact that evil persists in a world which should not reasonably expect it to have disappeared just because a victory—over one form of evil—has been won? Because our victory *was* a victory and not a defeat. An oppressive and immoral German régime was installed in France and in other countries; it was installed also in Germany; it threatened the world. It is broken; we broke it into pieces. That is victory.

The war that brought victory brought inevitable suffering to millions of people; it also brought suffering that might have been avoided—in Europe, wherever a mistake was made in bombing, or in the theory of bombing; in Japan, when we used the atom bomb. THE COMMONWEAL said this while the war was still on, and when it was not so easy to say it. But the incidental abuses of the war did not annul the legitimacy of the war against immediate enemies of freedom. The fact that there are other enemies of freedom in the world today does not annul the victory that we won.

We are faced with new responsibilities; we shall always be faced with new responsibilities. Because no martial victory can reopen the gates into the Garden of Eden.

Mr. Von Kuehnelt-Leddihn has a tendency to abandon this world to its fate. If American optimism, which he considers so ridiculous, can guard us from this temptation, if our democracy, which he mistrusts so deeply, can

be of some help, we had best preserve them—we intend to preserve them. But they need not depend, the one on ignorance, the other on unreasoned habit; they must be tested against despair, sharpened by wisdom and knowledge. We take Mr. Von Kuehnelt-Leddihn's article as a plea for us to continue to employ them for the good of the world. Our objections to his reasoning are made evident, but all through the article it is impossible not to feel the presence of a spirit intent on freedom, athirst for justice, wounded—and vividly surviving.

1. May not the act of taking out a membership card, a passport, a party badge have been a moral act, recorded where those things are recorded? Protect us from the pure and innocent *Mitglieder*!

2. There seems to me to be a real question if this brilliant passage of Christian "despair," and others coming up, are yet "integral." Wouldn't it be, in its way, a still more desperate view to *deny* that the "mountain of trivialities" in America, and the famous cushion of space and material opulence, can, or does, successfully hide the sword? For a sinner, the thought that justice need not be on earth, anyway, but all reserved until later, might permit at least time for comfortable optimism. All in all—without a bit minimizing Purgatory or Hell—it would take a juster man than the Psalmist not to feel that sins can be punished also in time, more painfully than even an extraordinarily busy, strong, successful and resilient David could in himself stand. It may be a fundamental optimist who dares want quick justice for friends and himself. It appears possible to overemphasize the cleavage between matter and spirit and the working out of the law in the two realms which really mingle disturbingly. The author reflects in the midst of ruins a contentment not induced by rich foods and high living, and that is not necessarily paradoxical.

3. I fear that this article and "The Menace of the Herd," and other fairly recent American writings of Francis Stuart Campbell and Eric von Kuehnelt-Leddihn force a rather different conclusion. The chance to say "I told you so" seems too good for the author to pass up. And if he has a "vested interest" in or a sympathy for the special political and other forms which have developed under Anglo-Saxon auspices, he has concealed them pretty well. The rest of this stirring article gives a good inkling of his views.

4. Earlier in the article, the author insists that human individual actions are not on a dead moral level. But sometimes he seems insensitive to normal arguments claiming that some collective actions of states are also worse than others. While agreeing that all parties waging modern wars go in for violence on a scale which makes measurement between them in this respect silly (and while avoiding here the argument of pacifism which the author does not bring up), one could make a case that America's rôle in the development and prosecution of World War II was less bad than Germany's—less bad,

indeed, than Austria's. Instrumentally, America's part was obviously less bad "politics." The case for the Tragedy of Europe is weakened by an apparent assumption, especially before outsiders, that it was all 50 percent of one and a half-dozen of the other. A long and awfully good argument ought to come before such a claim, however prevalent the assumption may now be in the defeated countries.

5. Surely hyperbole can go no farther. To think of suggesting that even if the pervading Russian problem were eliminated, everything in Europe would still be pretty hopeless. Or to dye with the deepest black all the treaties which came into being at the conclusion of both wars. It is understandable that the author himself should dislike the 1919 settlement so heartily, but to dub statesmen of that period—many of whom sincerely tried to apply national self-determination and other principles stemming from justice and freedom—as "criminally insane" is hardly in scale. Principles were violated on occasion, to be sure, in the treaties of that date, but the over-all effort embodied a serious attempt to build something that would last. No doubt less can be said for the Teheran-to-Potsdam series, reached in the heat of the war and its immediate aftermath and based on the unwarranted assumption of the Soviet's willingness to cooperate. What Stalin would have done during the war if America and Britain had been less willing to accede to his demands is still an unsettled controversy. But even these treaties, considering the stress under which they were concluded, do not merit the withering scorn at which Mr. Von Kuehnelt-Leddihn is so adept.

THE EDITORS.

The Screen

Laughing Out the Year

AND SO the movie year ended with a burst of comedies and musicals. Perhaps this is as good a way as any; but just how amusing you will find these pictures depends on you.

Readers of Robert Nathan's novel, "*The Bishop's Wife*," will probably be as surprised at the movie that was made from it as they are that it was the subject of a movie at all. In the original there is a great deal of talk about sex—on the higher levels, of course, because the principals are a bishop and his wife (between whom there is a well-defined incompatibility) and an angel who comes down to straighten things out but falls in love with the wife and leaves her vaguely happier and more content with her lot. Needless to say, the movie is different. Robert Sherwood and Leonardo Bercovici have written a good script that uses Nathan only as a starting point. The angel, made very handsome by Cary Grant, comes to assist the bishop with a big cathedral project. He soon wins everyone with his charm—particularly Loretta Young as the bishop's neglected wife, Monty Woolley as a lonely professor, and James Gleason, Gladys Cooper,

B. ALTMAN & CO.

FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK

FROM OUR COLLECTION

OF COLORED-STRIPE

ARROW SHIRTS



3.25 and 3.95

In a choice collection of woven stripes made of durable Sanforized* (maximum shrinkage 1%) cotton broadcloth. Mitoga-shaped bodies, for better fit. Soft collars with stays or fused collars that require no starch. Blue, tan, green or grey. Sizes 14 to 17.

Altman men's furnishings, main floor

... and at East Orange, White Plains and Manhasset

*Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Elsa Lanchester and various other people in expertly polished character rôles. The angel has much more difficulty with the bishop (David Niven), who soon senses the growing companionship that exists between the heavenly visitor and his wife. After a talky start, Director Henry Koster weaves a picture that is at times quite lovely; and in the skating scene it gets as close to poetry as movies ever do. The argument bogs down occasionally and can hardly be considered orthodox. But as a sophisticated Christmas carol, "The Bishop's Wife" comes through nicely and should please adults who like their movies off the beaten track.

Bob Hope doesn't have the best material to work with in "*Where There's Life*," but he manages to do the best he can with it. The script is rather plotty; in fact, at one time during the involved story Hope is reprimanded for cracking wise, and he comes back with, "Well, I've got to eat." I suppose he does, but this story has more suspense than gags as Bob works overtime escaping officials from Barovia who want him to go to Europe and be king. He is also busy running from assassins who have other ideas for Bob. Signe Hasso, as a very pretty Barovian general, George Coulouris and William Bendix help most in the supporting cast. If you're a Hope fan you'll probably enjoy every hopeful innuendo.

And if you're a Durante fan, "*This Time For Keeps*" will hold you, because Jimmy turns up oftener than usual and is his very funny and exasperated self in scene after scene. As a sort of guardian to Esther Williams he has to work hard—for Esther has for some reason fallen for singer Johnnie Johnston and Jimmy doesn't care for Johnnie. The plot gets a little topheavy; but the Technicolor is pretty, and Miss Williams's swimming and the water ballets are prettier. The music ranges from Lauritz Melchior's singing of "Martha" to Johnston's swinging it. But Durante is my boy; in his funniest number he finds the lost chord.

The movies carry the dream stuff one step farther in "*It Had to Be You*." Ginger Rogers plays a wealthy and unreasonable babe who walks out on prospective husbands three times at the altar. It turns out, when she is about to consider a fourth, that she is being pursued by her subconscious, who is played by Cornel Wilde dressed in an Indian suit. And much, much later it turns out that Ginger once fell in love with a little boy in an Indian suit, and libido Cornel is trying to lead her to this boy, who is now grown up and is played by Cornel Wilde in a fireman's suit. Some of this is rather amusing, and some, alas, gets pretty coy. The lines are bright; and Percy Waram and Spring Byington in the supporting cast have as much fun as the two leads. Needless to say, a fire at the fourth wedding gives Wilde an opportunity to rescue Ginger.

"*Good News*" is a new movie version of the musical comedy that was so good in the '20's. The old music is still tops in its field and a couple of new numbers come up to this high standard. The plot, although somewhat fixed up by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, is still concerned with a lot of high jinks at Tait College. The students, as played by June Allyson, Peter Lawford and

ever so many others, seem a little old for such carryings-on; perhaps the whole piece should have been done as a real period piece, even though its Technicolor and open-toed shoes are more modern innovations. However, in this case, anyone who likes a good old-fashioned musical comedy full of boys and girls and swell songs should enjoy this item. The dancing and singing of Joan McCracken and Mel Tormé are well worth the price of admission.

"*My Wild Irish Rose*" was so definitely designed for the Irish trade that it is difficult for anyone else to relax and enjoy it. I'm not too familiar with the story of Chauncey Olcott, the singer very famed at the beginning of this century, but I doubt very much if this script sticks to fact. Dennis Morgan sings and plays the rôle well enough, but he and the large supporting cast are buried in exaggerated blarney, Irish songs and Technicolor shamrocks. I kept watching for Sara Allgood and Ben Blue to reappear. They turn up much too seldom. But I suppose if it's in an ultra-Irish mood you are, you will feel all this is "A Little Bit of Heaven."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Labor Movement

Who Will Be Right?

THE National Association of Manufacturers has just held its annual congress in New York City, and an anxious world can now resume its prayers with even greater fervor than before.

Morris Sayre, newly elected president of the NAM, labored and brought forth the following cure for the rising fever of inflation: increase the 40-hour week to a 42-hour week; that is, time and a half only after 42 hours. Altogether there were 12 points in the NAM published program, most of which involved the government's cutting expenses, lowering taxes and removing what few controls it still retained over business. Labor leaders were encouraged not to ask for wage increases, although there was an admission that perhaps, in cases of extreme hardship—well, maybe, etc.

And then there was another point, No. 6, that involved a little sacrifice on the part of the employers. This one read: "Redoubling, by management, of its efforts to increase production to lower unit costs, and to pass on the benefits of such increased productivity to the public." Even here the NAM could not bring itself to utter the awful words, "lower prices."

But the most brilliant proposal of all was made at the big dinner by Lewis H. Brown of Johns-Manville, with 3,000 industrialists hanging breathless on his words. Mr. Brown said that the government should take a strong stand against any further wage increases for a year, at the end of which time it "could ask basic industries to stop price increases for a year." (Quotation from *New York Times* account of Brown's speech—italics mine.)

A few days later the Republican whips in Congress presented their program to stop inflation, and though it did not include Mr. Brown's pearl of great price or the 42-hour week, it did harmonize very nicely with the general theme of the NAM congress, namely, "Let's Every-

body Pitch in and Make Some Sacrifices Except Us."

Shortly before this had happened, about the same time as the NAM meeting, the 11 top officers of the CIO—President Phil Murray, Secretary-Treasurer Jim Carey and the nine vice-presidents—got together down in Washington and announced that the CIO was going after a third round of wage increases. Nothing was said about figures, but the impression is hovering around that they will ask for something between 10 and 15 cents an hour.

This announcement did not quite fit in with the earlier decision of the United Auto Workers, CIO, that they would press for wage demands if "quick Congressional action to stop inflation" was not forthcoming. Of course if the CIO's top command had waited a few days until the GOP had announced its program for Congress, then they could have announced that "since the Republican majority in Congress has made it clear that they will do nothing effective to stop rising prices, we are forced to, etc., etc." This would have made a much better impression.

At any rate, we see that wages will now pursue prices around another bend of the inflationary spiral, and of course they will never catch up—never, that is, until the inevitable crash, when there will be no wages at all for 10, 15 or 20 million workers, but only unemployment relief checks. And the NAM will blame it all on labor, because labor asked for raises, and labor will blame it on business, because business used every raicee as an excuse to boost prices three times more than was necessary. So who will be right?

Labor will be right. Labor will not be 100 percent right, because there have been instances in which unions have used their power to get more than they had a right to ask. But the NAM cannot laugh off profits which are now estimated at \$17,500,000,000 for 1947, after taxes, as compared with ten billions in 1943 and eight billions in 1929. The NAM cannot laugh off the job it did on price control and how it promised everybody that "within a reasonable time prices will adjust themselves naturally." (Those were the exact words used in a full-page ad of the NAM's that ran in February, 1946.)

Since OPA died in June of 1946—four months later—the retail price of "all commodities" has risen an estimated 23 percent. Wages have risen an estimated 17 percent. Wages, in short, are still 6 percent behind prices, and it should be remembered that in most industries wages are only a minor part of total cost.

The average wage in manufacturing is now just about \$50 a week (before taxes). Nobody seems to know the average income of the American manufacturer. But you can bet it is a good big notch above \$50 a week, either before or after taxes. So the question comes down to this: who is in the better position to make a sacrifice, the manufacturer or the wage-earner? If you answer that question, you answer the question: who is responsible for the failure to stop inflation? Of course, there is always Congress. But then Congress now is just another word for "business," so in the end we come back to the same old class-war prejudice we started out with. Merry Christmas, NAM.

JOHN C. CORT.

P.S.—The membership of the N. Y. local of the Newspaper Guild, CIO, finally cleaned all communist influence out of the top leadership of that key union in a pre-Christmas election. This is cause for post-Christmas rejoicing.

Books of the Week

Paris Herald. Al Laney. Appleton. \$3.00.

BOOKS about newspapers, by newspapermen, have a history of appealing to newspapermen only. Al Laney's lighthearted account of the *Paris Herald* should reverse the trend. In 330 pages he has crammed the ups and downs of the American paper abroad, and has liberally and spicily sprinkled them with anecdotes of the even lighter-hearted journalists who worked for it. It makes delightful reading, and though Mr. Laney has shied away from full treatment of the paper's dismal performance before World War II, he has given good focus to the picture of American between-the-wars foolishness which the *Herald* daily chronicled.

The *Herald* was born of the whims of Commodore James Gordon Bennett, surely (with the possible exception of Colorado's famed Dave Day) the most autocratic and mercurial boss any editor ever had. The Commodore, however, held tight to two cardinal journalistic virtues: a love of news and a terrific desire to beat the competition. He also knew the value of names. His foreign correspondence was the best; his listing of the doings of royalty and the socially prominent made the *Herald* required reading in the early 1900's. Without so intending, he trained Europe in the ways of American journalism, from which even the French press has showed some profit.

The first world war turned the *Herald*, for the first time, into a profitable venture, a fact which Bennett dismissed as "impossible." The end of the war brought his death. When Munsey took it over in 1920, he was likewise astonished to find the paper a money-maker, and he turned over its entire direction to Laurence Hills, telling him only to keep expenses down.

The Twenties, those fargone days in which Americans in Paris were either having a wonderful time or hot on the clue to a new all-meaningful art or literature, form the major pages of Laney's account. He was with the *Herald* from 1924 to 1935, and he loved Paris as much as he loved the paper. Life was the Dome terrace, cross-Channel swims, transatlantic flights, good wine, good food, good conversation, all underlaid with the conviction that there were nothing so beautiful in the world as the greens, the grays and the blues which Paris wore through the seasons. Americans descended from the Gare St. Lazare by the hundreds; the *Herald* was required reading. Even the depression failed to rumple the belief that the American-in-Paris way of life would go on forever. And even when relaxing, which was almost always, the

THEATRE GUILD PRODUCTIONS

A NEW
MUSICAL PLAY

ALLEGRO

Music by
RICHARD
RODGERS

Book & Lyrics by
OSCAR
HAMMERSTEIN 2nd

Entire Production
Staged by
AGNES de MILLE

MAJESTIC THEATRE

44th St. W. of Broadway. Evgs. 8:30
Matinees Thursday & Saturday, 2:30

THE MUSICAL
HIT

OKLAHOMA!

Based on Lynn Riggs' "Green Grow the Lilacs"

Music by
RICHARD
RODGERS

Book & Lyrics by
OSCAR
HAMMERSTEIN 2nd

Directed by
ROUBEN
MAMOULIAN

Dances by
AGNES
de MILLE

ST. JAMES Theatre

44th St. W. of Broadway. Evgs. 8:30
Matinees Thursday & Saturday, 2:30

staff managed to prove to the world—especially during Lindbergh and Byrd flights, and the Loewenstein suicide—that they could cover a story better than their able competitors.

Laney left in 1935, and was therefore in none too good a position to watch the disintegration from 1935 to 1940. The circulation plummeted (I remember well the night Jimmy Lardner sneaked into the press room to watch the presses turn over—3,500 was his count). The Spanish Republicans were always "Reds"; anti-Franco letters to the editor were thrown into the waste baskets. There was the most abject toadying to Hitler and Mussolini in return for a few inches of resort advertising.

Laney is easy on Hills on the grounds that other men, too, were pro-dictator. But what the staff under him could least understand was the utter dichotomy between New York and Paris; the brilliant cries to arms which were sounded by the New York *Herald Tribune*, the crisp factual realization by its European staff of where the world was headed—and, in Paris, only surrender. The camaraderie of the Paris staff disappeared. Harl on the copy desk believed as Hills did, only more strongly; B. J. Kospoth, a man of unknown nationality and mysterious past, sneered that his idol, Hitler, would walk over the French army in three weeks. Between the pro-Francoites and those of us who believed in the victory of the republicans as we believed in nothing, before or since, there was no love and occasionally open hatred. Inevitably the paper suffered.

It may be of passing interest that, at the last minute, Hills repented and in a front-page editorial, let Europe know that the US believed in the survival of democracy. It is of considerably more significance that the New York office, the war over, decided to print again a newspaper for which it did not have to apologize.

Whether it will survive, as it has two wars, the present shocking post-war period, whether France can ever again be the France we loved so well, are question marks of the future. The *Herald*, I dare predict, will never again be the happy roost for indigent and skylarking newspapermen. There can never again be a prose style and a capacity for drink as that which the late, great Sparrow Robertson possessed (Laney's stories of him are priceless). Nor will the financial editor again be an 87-year-old Englishman into whose office Hills stormed one day to protest an inaccuracy. "Glynn, do you want to be just a reporter all your life?"

Nostalgia is heady stuff, and it leaves a fearful hang-over. But for those who mourn the past, there are, I'm sure, an equal number of *Herald* graduates who look to the future, who hope the paper will fulfill the more important function of accurately relaying to Europe what America is doing and thinking—a function of which no other European newspaper, by reason of belief, lack of technical excellence, or lack of newsprint, is presently capable.

F. G. SMITH, JR.

Your Solar House. Maron J. Simon, General Editor. S. & S. \$3.00 cloth, \$1.00 paper.

A BOOK that shows forty-nine floor plans with elevations and plot plans, a house for each state and the District of Columbia, should be a useful handbook for would-be home-owners; each design by a different architect for his own locality. "Your Solar House" solves regional problems reasonably if not boldly: orien-

ration to the sun, careful calculation of roof overhangs, good judgment in the use of large glass areas, and consideration given to native architectural traditions when these are sound. The book like so many popular works on architecture is attractively designed.

For treeless industrial Michigan towns, Alden B. Dow offers a superb fantasy of interlocking porch and indoor living space: to connect luxurious planting inside and out. In New Jersey, Allmon Fordyce creates warm domestic charm with extensive use of native fieldstone. A noteworthy house by Harwell Hamilton Harris makes sunny California's contribution with a system of walled sun courts.

Unluckily a number of the architects can only re-create that old-fashioned house next door, with large holes-for-glass punched in its walls, with the laudable intention of letting in a little daylight. In these instances design goes by the board.

In a text that precedes the drawings, modern architecture appears to be explained as a parallel development with the manufacture of larger, clearer panes of glass. Perhaps a brief but more enlightening historical and esthetic discussion might have been added. Modern architecture, as a matter of fact, parallels the rise of industrialism, mass production methods and, in the other arts, expressionism and cubism.

The original purpose of these designs was to publicize the architectural uses of a new product of the glass industry. *Thermopane* is an airtight, moisture-proof sandwich of dehumidified air embraced by two exterior panes of glass. It is a valuable insulation medium, a means of opening your house to solar heat while containing less powerful radiations from your heating system: "Fear no more the heat o' the sun, Nor the furious winter's rages."

WILLIAM C. GUENTHER.

Country Place. Ann Petry. Houghton. \$2.75.

MY MIND, unlike that of most reviewers, is wholly uncluttered by any prior knowledge of Mrs. Petry. That she has written an earlier novel, "The Street," is news to me—and I have not read it. Whether this book is better or worse than her first I have no present way of knowing. Knowledge does not always make us innocent of prejudice; so, in this case, I can make claim to an unbiased mind.

Mrs. Petry's novel has had the unique disadvantage of promotional praise by Laura Z. Hobson. Miss Hobson is not a novelist herself: adequate proof of this is called "Gentlemen's Agreement." Yet she finds this book "the most compelling novel" she has read "in a long time." If we define a "long time" as a week, I agree. She further finds that Mrs. Petry was "not baffled by her own assignment." This is inflated nonsense. For Mrs. Petry was exactly baffled by the technical requirements of the novel. For the fact is that she is not clear and, in consequence I am not clear, about what Henry James used to call the point of view. We simply do not know whether the druggist she has chosen to tell the story is telling it at all times, or whether he is working a split shift with the author. Some pretty intimate descriptions of some pretty common privacies are herein given. The only way the druggist could know about them, as well as about a number of other things, is to be what the philosophers call immanent—which is pretty silly.

Miss Hobson writes that "this is a real story, and a

deeply disturbing one." I have no idea what a "real" story is, and Miss Hobson blithely refrains from telling me. Equally cavalier she alleges that Mrs. Petry is a "born story-teller." The history of novelists proves that there is no such thing as a born story-teller. And I should have thought that the whole point of "Gentlemen's Agreement" was that people aren't born anything—except babies.

The fact is that Mrs. Petry is a good novelist. She is much better than Faith Baldwin and much less than Hemingway. The characters she writes about are a dime a dozen in New England—and about twelve cents a dozen everywhere else. That is to say they are marred by the littleness and provincialism of small towns anywhere in our country. Mothers like Mrs. Granby bind and wound and spiritually cripple their sons in New England. But the silver cord was not invented there, and New Englanders do not have or claim a patent on it.

What Mrs. Petry is really concerned with is the rise and decline of our war marriages—the kind of marriage that has for one partner the quality of a daydream, and to which the woman has brought less, oh, far less, than the momentary fidelity of a prostitute.

Some critics have quarreled with Mrs. Petry for naming her woman—Johnny's girl—Glory. But they are wrong. For she is wonderfully and symbolically named. And in her and in her name Mrs. Petry is saying, if she is saying anything, that what ruins our marriages is the adolescent and romantic process of falling in love. Do you remember the opening sentence of Laurence Sterne's "Sentimental Journey"?

FRANCIS DOWNING.

Back Home. Bill Mauldin. Sloane. \$3.50.

THE PICTURES of Bill Mauldin were welcome bits of relief during the war. He understood the situations and the temperament of soldiers better than any other cartoonist—or, at least, he was more successful in recreating these qualities in his drawings. His work was admired and laughed at not only by enlisted men, but also by officers, many of whom were guilty of the postures which Mauldin ridiculed.

He had the exact feeling of the general soldier (officers included) mind (some officers included); its communal vulgarity, sulkiness and over-all humorous twist; its typical reaction to authority or unknowing words about soldiering by newspapers and army field manuals. A sodden, begrimed rifle-man quotes an army dictum to a clean, clerkish recruit: "A experienced field sojer will figure out a way to sleep warm and dry. Lemme know when ya do." Under a drawing of tired troops escorting well-dressed Germans to the rear Mauldin put a news item: "Fresh, spirited American troops, flushed with victory, are bringing in thousands of hungry, battle-weary prisoners. . . ."

His first book, "Up Front," a commentary with a collection of war pictures, was notable for its absence of smugness and sentimentality. "Back Home" is less fortunate because Mauldin has enlarged his field. There is missing that sharpness of depiction and proximity to a special class which he knew because he was a soldier, and which was greatly appreciated by so many because they were soldiers, too.

The drawings in the new book, although they suffer in a comparison with the war pictures, completely overshadow the writing. A radio announcer says, "You have

just heard our commentator read the Gettysburg Address. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect our sponsor's point of view." An account executive tells a copywriter, "The union was pleased with that full-page ad about Amalgamated Steel. Now Amalgamated wants us to do one about the union."

In the text Mauldin describes some of the difficulties he faced as he tried to resume his civilian rôle, and there is an ingenuous expression of his doubts about his ability, and his right to accept large sums of money. But the book is mainly a round-house swing at the American Legion, DAR, Fascists, Communists, Liberals, Reactionaries, and all exploiters of veterans. It is, by no means, pontifical, but it lacks the humor of the earlier book, and it sounds like so many other books by so many other lovers of freedom and justice. There are many generalizations, and, in one instance, his misunderstanding of some objections from Catholics for an official stand by the "Church" leads him to a cuteness that is not becoming. However, there is little, if anything, with which to take exception in this apologia—it's just that too many people have said the same things in the same way.

Mauldin's medium is drawing. He does no worse than most of the people who are exposing the evils and bigotries of the world when he writes, but he does no better. His pictures speak louder than his words.

GEORGE MILES.

The New Labor Law: Report by the Bureau of National Affairs, Washington, D. C. \$5.00.

THERE have been only a few good books dealing with the Taft-Hartley Act. Most of the commentaries on the market have originated with business organizations. Neither the AFL nor the CIO have seen fit to enlighten the public with their studied analysis of the law. Perhaps they have been too busy counter-punching to realize that a great service would have been done to labor by a scholarly commentary on this Act. However, the Bureau of National Affairs in Washington has come forth in a thick, paper-covered book, with the most comprehensive study seen in print up to now. Those who are interested will find the five dollar toll-charge no extravagance.

The BNA report, as it is called, covers the Act from many angles. The body of the book deals, first, with the meaning of the law, and, secondly, with the changes brought about in labor relations by the amendments of the Wagner Act. The interpretations are authoritative, even though unofficial. A severe critic might regret the abstract nature of the commentary. However, since the report was one of the earliest issued, one must not expect perfection. Probably, the Bureau of National Affairs intended the analysis as a manual for lawyers. If so, it easily serves its purpose as "the busy lawyers' guide." One not trained in the nuances of law will find some of the pages tough sledding. One not familiar with the history of collective bargaining under the Wagner Act, with the practice of the NLRB, or with the decisions of the courts since 1935, will lose much of the significance of the commentary. However, with the aid of other handbooks, the BNA report becomes completely intelligible.

There are those who might claim that the appendices are more important than the book itself. Six appendices are added to the main sections of the book, including the text of the Act, the reports of the Senate and House

Committees on Labor, the Conference (House-Senate) report, the Congressional Debate, and the text of the President's veto message.

These appendices are of vital importance. It is to Congressional statements that federal judges will go seeking the illusive and sometimes mysterious "Congressional intent." To those who followed the debate on the Act through the pages of the Congressional Record, a single repository of the frequently windy Congressional statements is a blessing. It may take ten or twenty years for the courts to make head or tail of the hundreds of provisions in the Act. During that time, the BNA appendices will have an enduring value. And in spite of the wide area covered by the report, the topical index at the rear of the book will serve as a handy device for those esoteric souls who can take their labor law only in spoonfuls.

For those who would like to know about the Taft-Hartley Act, but who would become insomniacs by the mere sight of this large volume, the BNA has prepared a special report of thirty-six pages which sells for a paltry twenty-five cents. The special report contains the Act itself and a brief intersectional commentary on each provision.

GEORGE A. KELLY.

Letters of James M. Barrie. Edited by Viola Meynell. Scribner's. \$3.50.

THESE carefully, not to say cautiously edited letters of the late though not particularly great Scotch playwright are interesting less for any insight they afford into their author than for the unwitting recreation of a time whose quality may not occur again, when an England and a world at war possessed a serenity and relative security neither the contemporary world nor England seem able longer to achieve.

From the letters devotees of Barrie will learn little they do not already know. That he was shy, honorable, whimsical and lonely, even people less devoted to him know. That his life seemed almost continually destined to touch tragedy, whether his own or his friends, is perhaps not as generally known. It helps account for his preoccupation with whimsy, perhaps for his most enduring work, "Peter Pan," which created a world whose innocence inevitably triumphed over evil. Scandal, tragedy and sorrow he encountered more than most people, even those of his prominence in his time. Yet in his fashion he surmounted them with the solid, professional body of his work and, additionally, with arduous and varied charities.

As with his contemporary, Kipling's, autobiography, so in these letters Barrie almost never tells more than he strictly intends to. The editor of the collection could be partly responsible for this, yet, even so, a portrait does emerge in its reticence, loneliness and capacity for a dry humor more often directed at himself than others. There seems more than a trace of affectation in the reticence and constant—always gracefully phrased—plaint of loneliness, but compared to current literary vice this is as measles to leprosy.

His time was one when the profession and art of writing was considered honorable, although there was less talk about its honor. Writers for the most part were taken seriously and not looked upon as anachronistic freaks or fortunate participants in a kind of lottery with M-G-M or Henry Seidel Canby's spinning the wheel. Barrie's friends and acquaintances included the Hardys

and most of the prominent English literati of the time; a section of the English nobility and military; diplomats, children and cricket players. His fondness for games of physical skill persisted most of his life and Australian cricketers visiting England to play for the "Ashes" always expected to be entertained by him and always were. He seems to have had a fashionable interest in a mild form of socialism and there were always a good deal of visiting back and forth with friends and journeyings into Scotland for the fishing. So that the mild golden glow of this century's first three decades shines through the letters with a nostalgia that must hurt many who were adults in those years. It helps compensate for the emotion lacking in almost all the letters except those to Cynthia Asquith, his secretary.

HARRY SYLVESTER.

The Indefinite River. Preston Schoyer. Dodd. \$3.00.

PRESTON SCHOYER, author of this far better than average book on the war and China, was himself a soldier in the Orient, and not an average GI, but one whose ingenuity provided an "underground railroad" over which Allied troops imprisoned by the Japanese, were able to reach the outer world. Mr. Schoyer's earlier book, "The Foreigners," was acclaimed widely, as one of sympathy and understanding. This one reveals the war that goes on within the soul of a man who wanted to do the right thing by the Chinese, although not quite clear, always, about what should be done and how to do it.

Captain Davis Russell was a civilized man, different in soul and expression from the whiskey-crazed characters who dive between the covers of many war books, remaining there until the coming of peace when they return to their civilian shells, no better, and usually much worse than they were the day they enlisted. Davis was eager to do the right thing but the regular Chinese Government thought otherwise, and his superior, Major Crump, contrived to profit from his daring.

The Captain's "dishonor" came suddenly, yet there was no shouting, no clicking of heels and rattling of sabers. He was kicked upstairs to satisfy the little people who were the local Chinese Government, and to provide a way for his grafting superior officer to profit from the black market. And the "dishonor" meant very little to a man who had learned to live his days one at a time, with his mind on doing his job well, as well as the world would let him do it.

There is no happy ending, and we are soon conscious of the end before the beginning is made clear to us. Nina must have foreseen all this, and her love for the Captain was a major experience that for a short time crowded out China, but in the long run China came back with all her massive power. Nina said it was all like some warriors who went to fight a noble cause, and were all killed. She did not know why it had happened, but the last two lines came to her:

*Pitiful are the bones by the Indefinite River,
Yet still they live in the dreams of the Secret Chamber.*

She thought that this meant a young girl's heart, for they live in their dreams, and "it will be the same for me after you are gone."

There is a girl in this book, one who is different from the commercial life back home, and one who is so involved in the intrigue that besets the Orient that she could upset Army plans, break discipline, scatter detail, and make the Japanese, the Chinese as well as the Amer-

icans who sought her aid, highly doubtful of her loyalties. She was Nina Lee, in her native tongue Lee Hsiao-chieh, whose religion was China, whom she sought to free from corruption, greed, disease and ignorance.

The book flows on. There is no really sharp crisis beyond the evacuation of Wuchuan. The Chinese Central Government is one of ineptness personified, and the Japanese, until the rice raid on Wuchuan, were far, far away, although near. The communists were the talk of every official gathering, and the real enemy of the ruling class. In moving from Wuchuan, the loss of the radio equipment—which Hollywood will make an "incident" in days to come—was not an incident, just forgetfulness. So, there were no crises, just character, and people, and human blunderings, all very natural like.

And the Indefinite River . . . "It is just an indefinite river. Where will it take us? It is like life, nothing certain, nothing definite," she said.

Far from his native America, Captain Russell plodded on, searching for her who had brought understanding to his restless, weary soul. But, ". . . it is not certain," Maguire had written, "but Buttercup thinks she is the one. He saw her at a small hotel near West Lake. If I get some information, I will let you know. . . ."

GEORGE STREATOR.

China Awake. Robert Payne. Dodd. \$4.00.

WITHIN the last few months American readers have been subjected to a barrage of books on the Far East written by the talented young Englishman, Robert Payne. This is the latest, but several more are in the immediate offing. As in the recently published "Revolt of Asia," Payne is quite blunt in disclosing that his sympathies lie with the revolutionaries, who are in this case the Chinese communists. His journal describes two visits to Red China and includes political conversations with various Chinese, especially students. There are also several pen portraits of such figures as Madame Sun Yat-sen, Dr. Sun Fo, Chu Teh, and Secretary (then General) Marshall. And, as usual, there is a strong plea for East-West unity.

This book falls far short of his "Forever China" and is merely additional evidence to support the belief that Mr. Payne is beginning to wear thin.

THOMAS H. D. MAHONEY

The Earth Beneath. Harold Heslop. John Day. \$3.00.

YOU will learn more from this novel about mines and miners than you will get from a dozen textbooks. Essentially it is the story of the proletarianizing of man told around the life of John Akers. Driven from the land, and to avoid starvation, he, with mother, father and brothers, leaves the Yorkshire Dales for the mines—there to lose independence, to see even the desire for it disappear in his brothers and to have his children accept the proletarian state, having known no other.

The beginnings of unionization in the mines—the solution never quite comprehended by John Akers—are dealt with more by implication than in detail. But even then the inadequacy of the solution is evident. And when the proposition is hinted at which would end the proletarianization of the miners—worker ownership of the mines—it is met with great incomprehension on the part of the miners, who have become so dishumanized by wage slavery that they no longer knew what to do with free-

Just Published . . .

PROTOHISTORY

An Explicative Account of the Development of Human Thought from Palaeolithic Times to the Persian Monarchy

By H. C. E. ZACHARIAS, Ph.D.

Illustrated

\$4.00

PROTOHISTORY recounts the development of human thought from palaeolithic times to the Persian monarchy.

Our institutions, attitudes, and trends all have their antecedents in an earlier age, and these sprang from still earlier ones. Thus we can trace the ancestry of our present civilization back to distant times by the study of written documents.

But students of history are not content to stop there. Vast periods of man's history preceded the earliest written evidence. For those remote periods other kinds of evidence are available for the expert who can decipher them: archaeological discoveries, linguistic influences, geographical conditions, the interplay and mingling of different types of civilization. A wealth of such information has been unearthed in recent years.

In PROTOHISTORY, the author, professor of history in the Catholic University at Peiping (China), gives us the fruit of these discoveries. Here we witness the conflict of diverse types of civilization, the development of society from simple family units to organized states, the rise and decline of human culture. The reader will learn of peaceful penetration, of ruthless aggression, and of overwhelmed civilizations in the long, long ago.

The work is not a defense of any theory; it is a factual account, based solely on ascertained data.

B. Herder Book Co.

15 and 17 South Broadway

Saint Louis 2, Missouri

SETON HILL COLLEGE

GREENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Pre-Professional Training for Medicine, Law,
and Social Service. Teacher Education.

Degrees in Liberal Arts, Music,
Home Economics

Accredited by Association of American Universities

Women from 11 foreign countries and 37 American States

College of CHESTNUT HILL

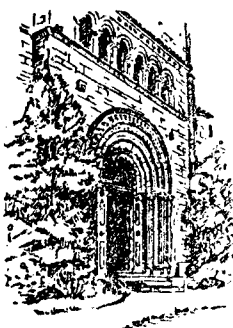
Chestnut Hill
Pennsylvania

Conducted by the Sisters of
St. Joseph

Approved by the Association of
American Universities.

For further information write
to the Registrar.

Prospective students should make early application.



ST. THOMAS MILITARY ACADEMY

A Catholic Preparatory School for Boys.
Classified by War Dept. as an "essen-
tially military" school. R.O.T.C. High-
est War Department designation. Fully
accredited. Well-rounded sports program.
Conducted by priests of the Archdiocese
of St. Paul assisted by lay faculty. Military in-
struction by U. S. Army officers. Catalog.

Address Very Rev. Vincent J. Flynn, President, Box 8.
St. Thomas Military Academy, St. Paul 1, Minn.

RETREATS FOR NEGROES

Weekend Retreats for Protestant and Catholic boys
of the Negro Race
could easily be started in our new mission if we had funds
to obtain cots, blankets, food, literature, etc. Would you
help us?

Rev. Edward Wahl, C. O. Box 982, Rock Hill, S. C.

Readers in Metropolitan New York:

Each Monday, 7:15 to 7:30 p.m.

An editor of THE COMMONWEAL speaks over
WFUV

Fordham University's New FM Station
90.1 Megacycles — Channel 211

dom. The evils of child labor, the inadequacy or lack
of safety devices, the day-to-day drudgery, are brought
out in a well-written story that makes a good compan-
ion to "How Green Was My Valley."

ROBERT C. LUDLOW.

The Art of Happy Marriage. James A. Magner. Bruce.
\$2.75.

THE WONDER of this book is that it seems so well
worth reading to a fellow with twenty-one years
of married life to look back upon and test it by. It's
addressed, of course, to young people: those who are just
thinking of marriage, those who are about to marry, and
those who are confronting the little odds and ends of
difficulty (or worse) to which the early years of married
life are always liable. It covers rather fully—and with
many a warning against a false and prudish conscience—
just about everything from courtship through the honey-
moon to the raising of children.

Though it isn't a heavy book, Father Magner has done
a good job here in building up, quite unobtrusively, a
concept of love involving many emotions, not the least
of which is one's intuitive sense of incompleteness, which
calls for satisfaction by complementary psychological
qualities to be found in a person of the opposite sex.

DAVID MARSHALL.

The Face of Robert E. Lee. Roy Meredith. Scribner's.
\$5.00.

THOSE who like their history pictorial are already
indebted to Mr. Meredith for *Mr. Lincoln's Camera
Man: Mathew B. Brady*. The debt is increased by this
volume, and indirect result perhaps of the research done
on the Brady project. Of the 370 illustrations in his book,
more than 100 are hitherto unpublished photographs taken
by Brady. Far more pictures of Lee were found by Mr.
Meredith than he had presumed were in existence. They
are all reproduced here, and they enable us to appreciate
the devastating effect of the war upon Lee. Five years
after the battles were over, Lee died at the age of 63.
His admirers will be drawn even more closely to him by
studying this book, in which the text admirably supple-
ments the photographs.

P.K.

CONTRIBUTORS

Erik von KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN spent the war years as an
exile from Austria in America, teaching, lecturing and writ-
ing his book, "The Menace of the Herd," under the pseudonym
of Francis Stuart Campbell.

Francis G. SMITH, Jr., worked for the *Paris Herald* from 1937-
1938 and again in 1939. After five years in the army he is
now general manager of the Golden Press, Denver, Colorado,
which publishes the *East Jefferson Sentinel* and the *Jefferson
County Republican*.

William C. GUENTHER is a resident of New Jersey especially
interested in modern homes.

Francis DOWNING is Eastern Educational Director for the
UAW, CIO.

George MILES has recently been released from the armed forces.
He is a graduate of Notre Dame.

Rev. George A. KELLY is one of the chaplains of the ACTU
in New York.

Harry SYLVESTER is the author of "Moon Gaffney" and is
bringing out a collection of short stories this spring.

George STREATOR is on the staff of the *New York Times*.

Thomas H. D. MAHONEY teaches political science at MIT and
Wellesley.

Robert C. LUDLOW is one of the editors of the *Catholic
Worker* in New York.